

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 116336

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 6209 ACTION ATHENS INFO SECSTATE
KHARTOUM ASMARA JUNE 3RD

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6209

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASC, ET

SUBJ: TENNECO SEVEN

REF: ATHENS 3316

1. PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO TENNECO REPS FROM
EMBOFF IN ASMARA BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE
ERITREANS.

(A) A LARGE NUMBER OF LOCAL VILLAGE ELDERS AND SHEIKHS
HAVE GONE OUT TO CONTACT THE ELF IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN THE
RELEASE OF THE CAPTIVES. THEIR EFFORTS HAVE FAILED TO
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DATE. EMBOFF HAS BEEN TOLD THAT MATTERS HAVE REACHED THE

POINT WHERE ELF FORCES IN THE FIELD CANNOT MAKE ANY DECISIONS ON THE RELEASE OF CAPTIVES WITHOUT INVOLVEMENT THE EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP.

(B) IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO PERSUADE THE ELF TO DROP ITS REQUEST FOR RANSOM AND ALSO TO DROP POLITICAL DEMANDS AS TENNECO CAN DEMONSTRATE IT IS NOT IN POSITION TO DELIVER ON LATTER POINT. TENNECO SHOULD STRESS THE POSITIVE THINGS IT COULD DO, SUCH AS CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF ERITREA'S MINERAL RESOURCES AND ONLY WITH FULL AGREEMENT WITH ELF. BELIEVE MRS. JAMES' LETTER TO ELF CONTAINS SOME OF THE BEST ARGUMENTS THAT CAN BE MADE. RATHER THAN ATTEMPT NEGOTIATE ELF DEMANDS IT MAY BE WORTH TRYING TO COME UP WITH OFFERS THAT ARE REASONABLE AND THAT WILL BENEFIT THE PEOPLE OF ERITREA. EMBOFF CONFIRMS THAT ZEIN IS WELL KNOWN IN AREA AND IS TYPE OF MAN WHO MAY RESPOND FAVORABLY TO SUCH COUNTER OFFERS.

(C) ZEIN'S COMMENTS THAT MURDER AND ABDUCTION OF NURSES WAS DONE BY OUTLAW GROUP NOT BORNE OUT BY FACTS. TENNECO SHOULD STRESS THAT THIS INCIDENT AND HOLDING OF CAPTIVES IS RESULTING IN WITHDRAWAL OF ALL MEDICAL STAFF WHO WERE ASSISTING ERITREA AND ELF SHOULD REALIZE THAT ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT PROBABLY ENCOURAGES SUCH WITHDRAWAL, FOR WHEN MEDICAL PEOPLE ARE GONE THEN ERITREA WILL BE AT THE COMPLETE MERCY OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE. ELF SHOULD ALSO REALIZE THAT INSTEAD OF RELEASING POLITICAL PRISONERS, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD RATHER LET THE ELF KILL THE HOSTAGES SO ELF WOULD GET WORLDWIDE BAD REPUTATION.

2. EMBASSY HAS FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS ON NEGOTIATING TACTICS:

(A) WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL DEMANDS ON IEG, TENNECO NEGOTIATORS MAY WISH CONTEND THAT IT IS UNJUST TO ALL CONCERNED SEEK USE TENNECO SEVEN AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHO HAVE SUFFERED ENOUGH, TO MAKE RELEASE CONTINGENT ON RESOLUTION PROBLEM BETWEEN IEG AND ELF. LATTER WELL PLACE KNOW HOW LONG THIS COULD DELAY RELEASE OF CAPTIVES.

(B) AS FOR RANSOM DEMAND, TENNECO NEGOTIATOR COULD POINT OUT THAT POLITICAL PURPOSES OF MOVEMENT ILL SERVED BY CONFIDENTIAL

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PECUNIARY DEMAND ON COMPANY WHICH HAS NO POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND ONLY SEEKS TRANSACT BUSINESS. CLEARLY COMPANY'S PROPOSED ACTIVITIES WOULD CREATE JOBS AND THUS PUMP WEALTH TO PEOPLES OF ERITREA AS IS TRUE IN SIMILAR CONTEXT ELSEWHERE IN THIRD WORLD. TENNECO AND ALL OTHER POTENTIAL INVESTORS COULD ONLY BE DISCOURAGED BY RANSOM DEMAND TO DETRIMENT OF PROJECT AND ERITREA'S PEOPLES. IN SHORT, RANSOM WOULD WORK AGAINST DEVELOPMENT OF ERITREA. PVSSMEN #

HAVE ALREADY BEEN DETAINED OVER TWO MONTHS,
MATTER MUST BE RESOLVED, AND TENNECO OBVIOUSLY PREPARED
DISCUSS THIS IF ELF INSISTS.
WYMAN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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